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For Immediate Release: October 1, 2004  
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**State Fire Marshal Coan Announces Fire Prevention Week, October 3-9, 2004**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan announced that Governor Mitt Romney has proclaimed next week, October 3-9, 2004, as Fire Prevention Week. Coan said, "Because fire can grow and spread so quickly, having working smoke alarms in your home can mean the difference between life and death. But these life-saving devices are only effective when they're working properly. Smoke alarms with batteries that are dead, disconnected, or missing can't alert you to the dangers of smoke and fire. That's why this year's theme is *It's Fire Prevention Week: Test Your Smoke Alarms*. Smoke alarms give you and your family early warning of fire and poisonous smoke. Working smoke alarms can double your chances of surviving a fire."

Coan said, "Smoke alarms are only the first step. It is important to know what to do when the smoke alarm sounds in the middle of the night. Most fatal fires occur when people are asleep, and smoke will not wake you up. Making a home escape plan and holding a fire drill at home to practice it, will help everyone, especially children, know what to do to get outside safely to a meeting place."

In 2003, there were 27,353 reported fires in the Commonwealth that caused 420 civilian injuries, over 500 firefighter injuries, 61 civilian deaths, one firefighter death and more than \$195 million dollars in property damage. All fires are reported to the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS), in the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Fire departments across the state are sending trained firefighter-educators into classrooms and senior centers, holding open houses at local fire stations, organizing community-wide fire drills, and working with local businesses to educate the public about fire safety.

**What Can You Do to Celebrate Fire Prevention Week?**

- Test your smoke alarms.
- Replace the batteries twice a year.
- Replace the detectors every ten years.
- Make a home escape plan with two ways out and a family meeting place.

*Administrative Services • Hazardous Materials Response*  
*Massachusetts Firefighting Academy • Office of the State Fire Marshal*

- Hold a fire drill at home
- Go to an open house at a local fire department near you. This is the 11<sup>th</sup> year that Papa Gino's has been partnering with local fire departments to sponsor open houses. For a list of open houses, look on our webpage at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs).
- Bring a home escape plan to a True Value Hardware Store for a free trick-or-treat safety light.
- Contact your local fire department with questions on fire prevention and safety.
- Learn more about fire safety, the Student Awareness of Fire Education Program – S.A.F.E, a partnership between firefighters and teachers, and to read true-life stories about the more than 180 Young Heroes from the program, log onto the Department of Fire Services webpage at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs).